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REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND ON THE WORK OF ITS ANNUAL SESSION OF 1996

(17-21 June 1996)*

* The present document is a mimeographed version of the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on its annual session (17-21 June 1996). The reports on the first regular session (22-25 January) and the second regular session (9-12 April) are issued as parts I and II, respectively. Those reports, as well as the report on the third regular session (16-19 September), will be combined and issued in final form as Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 12 (E/1996/32/Rev.1-E/ICEF/1996/12/Rev.1).

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I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Statements by the President of the Board and the Executive Director

1. The President said that this annual session had special significance because of the fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF. Members of the UNICEF family represented at the session - Government ministers and representatives, National Committees for UNICEF, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and UNICEF headquarters and field staff - had worked on behalf of the world's children and women for half a century, registering many important successes. The session would provide an opportunity to celebrate those achievements and to look to the future to determine how the Board can help UNICEF to meet the challenges of the next century.

2. The Executive Director said that the Executive Board had been providing guidance to the secretariat for 50 years, as UNICEF has changed from an "international children's emergency fund" focusing on relief for children in countries devastated by the Second World War, to an operational agency dedicated to the survival, development and, increasingly, the protection of children and women around the world. For 50 years, UNICEF, Governments and NGOs had worked together, forging strong partnerships on behalf of children and achieving dramatic improvements in their health and well-being. For 50 years, UNICEF field staff had worked in often difficult or dangerous conditions to provide services to children in need, and some had been killed while performing their duties. For 50 years, UNICEF had worked to earn the trust of its partners and the public at large in trying to fulfil its mission. (See E/ICEF/1996/CRP.19 for the full text of her remarks.)

B. Adoption of the agenda

3. The agenda of the session, as contained in document E/ICEF/1996/13, contained the following items:

Item 1: Opening statements by the President of the Board and the Executive Director

Item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization of work

Item 3: Report of the Executive Director

Item 4: Progress report on follow-up to the World Summit for Children

Item 5: Medium-term plan (MTP) for the period 1996-1999

Item 6: Review of UNICEF policies and strategies on child protection

Item 7: Conceptual framework for UNICEF emergency interventions

Item 8: Greeting Card and related Operations (GCO):

(a) GCO work plan and proposed budget for 1996

(b) GCO financial report and accounts for the year ended 30 April 1995

Item 9: Progress report on the Management Excellence Programme (MEP)

Item 10: Harmonization of budget presentations

Item 11: Draft report of the Secretary-General on enhancing internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes

Item 12: Update on the audit of the Kenya country office

Item 13: Reports on the meetings of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education (JCE) and the UNICEF/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP)

Item 14: Report of the Working Group on Documentation

Item 15: Other matters

Item 16: Concluding remarks by the Executive Director and the President of the Board

4. The Secretary of the Executive Board reviewed some of the revisions to the draft agenda that had been decided at the pre-session meeting on 24 May. There would be an election for the Vice-President from the Asian group of States. The ceremony for the recipient of the 1996 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award would be held on 19 June. The Chairperson of the Global Staff Association (GSA) would address the Board following the introduction of agenda item 9 on MEP. The agenda for the third regular session in September would be discussed under agenda item 15 "Other matters". He also advised Board members that there would be an informal meeting on 18 June on the World Congress Against Commercial Child Sexual Exploitation initiated by Mrs. Lisbet Palme. The agenda was then adopted.

5. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced the observer delegations that had submitted credentials for the session and had advised the secretariat of the agenda items in which they had a special interest. They were (with the agenda items indicated, if any, shown in parentheses): Albania; Algeria (all); Armenia (3, 4, 5, 7); Australia; Austria (none); Bangladesh (all); Belarus; Belgium (all); Benin (all); Bosnia and Herzegovina; Botswana; Cape Verde; Colombia; Congo; Croatia; Czech Republic; Djibouti; Egypt; Eritrea; Finland; Germany (all); Guatemala; Guyana; Haiti; Holy See (all); Honduras; Ireland (all); Israel; Kazakstan (all); Latvia (all); Lesotho; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malawi; Malta (all); Mexico (all); Mozambique; Nepal (all); New Zealand (3, 4, 5, 6, 7); Nicaragua; Nigeria; Panama; Poland (all); Portugal; Republic of Moldova; Slovakia; Slovenia; South Africa (all); Spain (all); Sudan; Swaziland; Syrian Arab Republic; Thailand; Turkmenistan; Yemen; and Zimbabwe.

6. In addition, the League of Arab States had submitted credentials, as had the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (7); the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (6); the World Food Programme; WHO; the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF (all); Anglican Consultative Council; Bahá'í International Community; Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (4, 13); Caritas Internationalis; Catholic International Union for Social Service (6); Church World Service; Dhaka Ahsania Mission; International Association of Lions Clubs; International Catholic Child Bureau (6); International Committee of the Red Cross; International Council of

Psychologists (6); International Council of Women; International Council on Social Welfare (3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 13); International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres; International Federation of Social Workers (3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 13); Pax Christi International (6); World Movement of Mothers (5, 6, 8); World Organization for Early Childhood Education (6, 7, 13); and NGO Committee on UNICEF (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 16).

C. Election of officers of the Executive Board

7. The President announced that the Executive Board had agreed to the election of Dr. Hicham Hamdan (Lebanon) as Vice-President for the Asian group of States to replace Mrs. Mitra Vasisht (India), with immediate effect until the end of the present term.

8. On the nomination of the Western European and Other group of States, the Executive Board agreed to the election of Mr. Dino Beti (Switzerland) as Vice-President to replace Mr. Jan Top Christensen (Denmark), with effect from 1 July until the end of the present term.

II. DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Report of the Executive Director

9. The Executive Board had before it the report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1996/10 (Part I)), and a note prepared by the secretariat on some of the challenges faced by UNICEF in the past year and how they were addressed (E/ICEF/1996/CRP.24), both of which were introduced by the Executive Director.

10. Many delegations congratulated UNICEF on its fiftieth anniversary, praised the organization's accomplishments and spoke of the dedication of both UNICEF staff and National Committees. UNICEF had earned respect world-wide because it had made a positive difference in the lives of children, and one speaker read a special message from his country's President.

11. A number of delegations said that the note prepared by the secretariat was a useful supplement to the Executive Director's report because of its focus on child rights and on the continuing decline in donor contributions to general resources. Many speakers suggested that in future, the main report should be shorter, more "reader-friendly", of higher analytical quality and more strategic in the choice of topics covered. It should be concise and not repetitive or overlap with the content of other reports and it should use terminology that is consistent with standard terminology used by the United Nations, e.g., on gender.

12. Many delegations concurred with the report's emphasis on the continuing decline in contributions to general resources and urged Governments to increase those contributions. Contributions to general resources were vital, in particular as they preserved the multilateral character of UNICEF cooperation. Several delegations suggested that the criteria for the allocation of general resources be reviewed and made more transparent. One speaker stated that the allocation of general resources to countries should show the allocation per child and that the two most important criteria were the under-five mortality rate and the country's income. A delegation announced that it would increase its general resources contribution to UNICEF in 1997 by 33 per cent. Another speaker said that National Committees for UNICEF had grown in importance as fund-raisers for UNICEF, raising more than 30 per cent of its resources.

13. A delegation asked about the apparent increase in UNICEF administrative expenditures during 1995 as compared to 1994. Karin Sham Poo, Deputy Executive Director, said that there was a biennial budget for the period 1994-1995 and that expenditures for both years did not exceed the approved budget level. Some planned expenditure in 1994 had been deferred until 1995 to covers costs arising from implementation of the MEP and the move of some units to the Third Avenue office site.

14. Concerning MEP, one delegation expressed appreciation for the cultural change occurring within UNICEF, which was leading towards increased transparency and improved partnerships. Others expressed interest in the idea of decentralizing some strategic functions from headquarters to regional offices and in a more effective approach to teamwork throughout the organization. Some speakers said that the Executive Board should avoid micromanagement. One delegation asked when the Board would make decisions regarding specific MEP proposals. A delegation emphasized the need for improved coordination between the project teams responsible for the human resources strategy and for staff deployment, and another requested additional information about the scope of work on human resources matters with respect to MEP.

15. Many delegations commended the secretariat for the high quality of information and analysis found in the recent issue of The Progress of Nations, citing especially the chapters on maternal mortality and protein-energy malnutrition (PEM). The Executive Director concurred with the comments on PEM, stressing that the promotion of exclusive breast-feeding was a major strategic intervention towards reducing PEM. Speakers cited the favourable coverage given to the launch of the report and its positive reception by the general public. Several delegations suggested that data on maternal mortality and other subjects be verified prior to publication of the report. One speaker stated that the data presented in the Executive Director's report and in The Progress of Nations should be consistent.

16. Many delegations addressed the subject of progress towards achievement of the global goals for children and women, including linkages with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Several delegations complimented UNICEF on its contributions to the achievement of the goals, noting, inter alia, progress towards the eradication of polio and the elimination of guinea worm disease. One speaker stated that UNICEF had created recognition within the international community that goals with quantified targets were achievable and key to progress in social development. However, virtually all speakers said that much more remains to be done if the global goals are to be achieved by the year 2000 and in ways that are sustainable. Many delegations urged UNICEF to intensify its support, e.g., by employing additional programme strategies associated with the child rights approach; persuading countries to integrate children's needs into national decision-making processes; improving the diagnosis of key problems such as anaemia; and continuing to allocate substantial general resources to the "silent emergency". The linkage between the achievement of the global goals and efforts to mobilize resources for basic social services under the 20/20 initiative was noted by many delegations.

17. A number of delegations cited the value of the multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS), but urged UNICEF to assure that its use resulted in strengthening the capacities of national statistical services. Delegations also requested additional information on MICS, including its purpose, efficacy as a technical strategy and cost-effectiveness. Speakers stressed the overall importance of monitoring and evaluation and encouraged that these components be incorporated into the mainstream interventions of UNICEF with countries.

18. Delegations expressed support for the introduction by UNICEF of a rights-based approach to improving the situation of children and women. One delegation stated that the Convention on the Rights of the Child should be the sole framework for UNICEF programme policies. Several delegations highlighted the linkages between efforts of States Parties to implement the Convention and the fact that approximately 150 countries also were implementing national programmes of action (NPAs) which address both the global goals and child rights. Several delegations drew the same parallels with the implementation by States Parties of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. However, one delegation stated that in the case of the latter, UNICEF should play a more limited role as another United Nations agency was designated as the lead agency. Delegations requested that the report include information from reports of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. A speaker said that the Treaty Section of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs should distribute the questionnaire on the subject of enlarging the Committee's membership.

19. Many delegations underscored the importance of the strategies related to capacity-building and sustainability. Several speakers requested additional information on the indicators used by UNICEF to assess the progress of

capacity-building at all levels of Government. Speakers emphasized the importance of UNICEF interventions with civil society, especially local-level organizations and communities, so that countries and communities would take responsibility and feel ownership for UNICEF-supported interventions such as the Bamako Initiative. Many delegations urged UNICEF to focus on the strategy related to social mobilization and to establish a more active presence at the community level. One delegation said that UNICEF should move beyond advocacy interventions on empowerment and address interventions which would generate more involvement of communities and civil society at large. Another delegation cited successful social mobilization through a recent mass rally of about 100,000 people in the country's capital to promote the rights of children.

20. A number of delegations stressed in particular UNICEF interventions which would address the issue of gender at both national and international levels. One delegation urged UNICEF to give more emphasis to the role of the mother instead of concentrating resources on specific interventions, such as the supply of vitamin A, because the quality of the life of the mother is closely associated with the quality of the life of the child. Another delegation stated that the rights of women are closely linked to the rights of children. Several delegations expressed support for the UNICEF strategy for follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women.

21. Addressing the subject of poverty alleviation, several delegations proposed that UNICEF associate such interventions with follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. A speaker noted that the Secretary-General had designated 1996 as the Year of Poverty Alleviation and that the Decade of Poverty would begin from 1997, highlighting, inter alia, concerns about protecting children from the negative consequences of poverty. One speaker stated that the report of the Executive Director should reflect a new approach in which UNICEF demonstrates the use of multisectoral strategies and integrated programmes as major interventions to support poverty alleviation efforts. Other speakers urged UNICEF to continue to devote most of its financial resources to efforts that support poverty alleviation and to give priority to interventions involving capacity-building, sustainability, gender equality and monitoring and evaluation.

22. With respect to specific UNICEF programme interventions, a number of delegations stressed that priority should be given to women's health, reproductive health and youth health, citing the involvement of UNICEF in campaigns against the spread of HIV/AIDS and the promotion of environmental health. Other delegations requested that UNICEF support evaluations of the experiences gained in Africa with the Bamako Initiative to ensure its sustainability. The Executive Director said that the Bamako Initiative was not limited to countries in Africa, but was being implemented in countries in other regions. The Initiative was part of an overall approach that UNICEF supports which relates to development and the sustainability of primary health care (PHC) world-wide. A consultation between UNICEF and WHO in 1997 would focus on one major aspect of PHC, strengthening of district and local health systems. Another delegation asked when the secretariat would present to the Board the report containing the guidelines for implementation of the approved health strategy. The Executive Director said that the proposed guidelines would be presented in 1997 after the Board had reviewed an outline for the guidelines at its third regular session in September.

23. Several speakers referred to the importance of the meeting taking place in Amman, Jordan, on the assessment of progress towards the global goals for education. Delegations stressed the importance of girls' education and voiced their concern about the lack of progress in some countries.

24. Many delegations emphasized the importance of maintaining Africa as a high priority region, especially sub-Saharan Africa. Speakers urged UNICEF to focus on integrated planning to improve health care and reduce under-five mortality. Many delegations expressed appreciation for the commitment and involvement of UNICEF in the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, but said that it should not result in a diversion of resources from the priority interventions of country programmes of cooperation.

25. Several delegations stated that the report did not sufficiently highlight developments in the Middle East and North Africa region. Several other speakers expressed appreciation for UNICEF support to Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States.

26. Many delegations stressed the importance of coordination between United Nations agencies, specifically within the context of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 of 22 December 1992 and 48/162 of 20 December 1993. Some speakers stated that each agency's interest remained a constraint to more effective coordination of activities. Several speakers requested that the report include more information on activities related to the resident coordinator system and operational activities for development. One speaker emphasized the importance of more resident coordinators being drawn from UNICEF staff. Several delegations requested additional information on the process of working with partners, including the constraints, and underscored the importance of lessons learned at the field level.

27. Many delegations expressed views on various aspects of child protection, including exploitation, children in armed conflict, child soldiers, domestic violence, crime, child labour, children not attending school, sexual abuse and trafficking. Referring to the report on children in need of special protection measures (see paragraphs 67-69 below), delegations underlined the importance of UNICEF advocacy with Governments on the protection of all children. One delegation said that the UNICEF approach should not become too narrow and legalistic, but should remain holistic, taking into account the socio-economic needs that have to be met so that child rights can be realized. Another said that the concept of child rights encompassed all children, and that there was also a need for special protection for children in especially difficult circumstances. Several delegations said that urbanization affects many such children and referred to both HABITAT II and the International Conference on Population and Development. The Executive Director confirmed that UNICEF took a broad, holistic approach to child rights, agreeing that the concept of child rights involved special protection measures for children in especially difficult circumstances.

28. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the global role of UNICEF in advocating for child rights, including with industrialized countries; its use of advocacy against war and to promote peace; and various efforts, including "corridors of tranquility" and advocacy for the abolition of anti-personnel land-mines, to protect children from armed conflict. One delegation suggested that more well-defined activities should be identified.

29. With respect to UNICEF emergency programmes, a number of delegations said that there was further scope for collaboration between UNICEF and the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). One speaker said that UNICEF should address the needs of children affected by war and natural disasters. Another delegation praised UNICEF work in education during emergencies. It was suggested that the conceptual framework for the UNICEF role in emergencies needed to be strengthened with respect to the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 95/56 of 28 July 1995. One delegation requested additional

information on coordination and the division of labour and responsibilities among United Nations organizations. Several speakers expressed concern that UNICEF had to respond to 21 emergency situations during 1995, saying that this large demand should involve a cooperative approach with other United Nations agencies.

B. Progress report on follow-up to the World Summit for Children

30. The Executive Board had before it the progress report on follow-up to the World Summit for Children (E/ICEF/1996/15), which was introduced by the Executive Director. Several delegations commented that the progress report was a valuable preview to the Secretary-General's report on progress towards the goals of the World Summit for Children, to be presented to the General Assembly on 30 September 1996.

31. A number of delegations commended UNICEF for its leadership in organizing the World Summit, in assisting countries in developing NPAs and in monitoring progress towards the World Summit goals. A combination of national and international commitments were necessary to continue the outstanding work of UNICEF and to achieve the goals. Many delegations spoke in favour of the goals as the central focus of UNICEF efforts and expressed satisfaction with achievements made by the majority of countries. However, more attention should now be given to capacity-building to ensure the sustainability of the advancements made.

32. There was overall support for the mid-decade review. It was hoped that the Secretary-General's report would provide a clear and accurate picture on the situation of children at both global and individual country levels. Some delegations agreed that the review was not an end in itself, and one delegation proposed that global goals should be reviewed in the context of national realities. Another speaker stated that all countries should complete the mid-decade review in 1996 and formulate strategies for children for the coming five years.

33. Many delegations spoke favourably of UNICEF efforts to monitor and evaluate progress towards the World Summit goals and noted that national reviews were essential to the global mid-decade review. UNICEF was encouraged to cooperate and collaborate more closely with national and international partners in monitoring and evaluating progress towards the goals. The secretariat responded that UNICEF has been stressing partnerships and cooperating with Governments, NGOs, international organizations, institutions and centres of excellence in developing indicators and conducting surveys. It shared updated information with the Board on MICS carried out in different countries and regions.

34. Several delegations provided updated information on national reviews in their countries and thanked UNICEF for its active involvement and technical and financial assistance to conduct more reviews. A speaker said that the information contained in the document on his country in annex IV was outdated, as his country had already completed and approved its NPA. Another speaker mentioned the upcoming meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, which would be an important opportunity for the region to review progress and refocus efforts on children.

35. Delegations urged the secretariat to encourage and coordinate cross-country and regional cooperation, including with other United Nations agencies and international financial institutions. Another delegation expressed

concern about lack of data in her country and addressed the need to improve local capacity for monitoring and evaluation. A number of delegations stressed that poverty was the root of many social problems and requested UNICEF to continue its support to income-generating activities, especially for women, and to focus on capacity-building and empowerment to sustain achievements.

36. One delegation was concerned that Africa lagged behind other regions in progress towards the World Summit goals and urged the secretariat to continue to support Africa as its priority region. The delegation asked the secretariat to find ways to enable African countries to become "owners" of development. The same speaker expressed concern about maternal mortality and encouraged the secretariat to stress women's health and women's overall role in social development. Another speaker commented that the maternal mortality rate (MMR) remained high because the approaches were vertical and, therefore, unable to deal with more complicated causes of maternal mortality.

37. One delegation requested the secretariat to strengthen its cooperation with other related United Nations agencies at the field level. The delegation also spoke about the role of NGOs and the private sector which was inadequately addressed in the report.

38. One delegation expressed dissatisfaction with the generality of indicators, as they did not reflect disparity. The delegation requested UNICEF to identify adequate indicators for monitoring progress. A few delegations expressed concern about the appropriateness and accuracy of data and figures used in publications. Two delegations said that the new method of estimating MMR was confusing and asked the secretariat to clarify the method used. One speaker urged UNICEF to pay closer attention to the quality of data and data sources and said that data used should reflect actual situations. The secretariat replied that it would organize an informal session for delegations to clarify the new method of estimating MMR.

39. One delegation endorsed the importance of the mid-decade review and proposed that countries should make financial commitments to the review. The delegation expressed an interest in the cost implications of the review and hoped that quantitative as well as qualitative aspects of progress would be emphasized equally. Two delegations shared the concern of the Executive Director on progress made and reports by industrial countries. The secretariat said that there was no budget for the review, but that it was keeping track on the cost of MICS. Currently, monitoring focused more on quantitative rather than qualitative aspects of progress, and it was hoped that this would be improved in the future. (See chap. IV, decision 1996/21, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

C. Medium-term plan for the period 1996-1999

Programmatic issues

40. The Executive Board had before it the MTP for the period 1996-1999 (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.10), which was introduced by the Executive Director. There was overall support for the MTP. Many delegations said that it provided guidelines, strategies and policies for operations and programmes in line with Board decisions.

41. A delegation said that the MTP should be revised based on the results of the mid-decade review. Others said that the MTP did not list detailed objectives nor were there any benchmarks to facilitate monitoring and evaluation

of programmes. They expected specific objectives be incorporated in the next plan. In response to a comment that the MEP process was not fully reflected in the MTP, the Executive Director said that the MEP process was discussed in a separate report (see paragraphs 98-123 below). The MEP process has recommended the establishment of a Quality Assurance Group to set quality assurance standards in all aspects of UNICEF work and a mechanism to monitor and assess them.

42. Many delegations supported the emphasis given to country programmes. Several speakers supported adapting country programmes to local, regional or subregional needs and considered this the most valuable asset of UNICEF.

43. Delegations encouraged UNICEF to assist countries to meet both the needs and rights of children. Several speakers suggested that the role of UNICEF in relation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child be discussed within the United Nations system as a whole. UNICEF was requested to increase its collaboration with other United Nations agencies in areas related to the Convention. According to one delegation, the MTP gave the impression that the needs-based and rights-based approaches were in competition with each other while, in fact, they were equally important. Survival and development, like health and education, were fundamental rights. The delegation said that there should be criteria to determine priorities and allocate funds to meet the needs of children and for advocacy for their rights. Advocacy should be based on partnership, sound analysis and the active participation of civil society. It was suggested that UNICEF work with the Committee on the Rights of the Child be carefully examined. Another speaker, supported by others, proposed that discussions be held on the definition of a child under 18 years of age and its implications for programming.

44. A number of delegations referred to the link between the MTP and the Mission Statement. Two delegations said that the World Summit goals, which were far more concrete than rights, should form the conceptual framework of the MTP, not the Mission Statement. The secretariat replied that the World Summit goals remained a priority for UNICEF.

45. A few delegations emphasized the basic rights of child survival and development in developing countries, adding that poverty alleviation was fundamental to meeting both the needs and the rights of children. A number of speakers commented that poverty alleviation should be the framework of action and should be incorporated into the MTP and country programmes.

46. Many delegations endorsed the strategies, overarching aim of empowerment and programming focuses of the MTP. The importance of the catalytic role of UNICEF in providing basic social services was emphasized. Efficiency, capacity-building and empowerment were also stressed by several speakers who requested information on specific strategies developed by UNICEF to increase national capacities. A few speakers said that strategies should be adapted to country and regional conditions, while another speaker said that the MTP contained working methods to implement sectoral strategies approved by the Board and not real strategies.

47. Many delegations supported the major fields of activities outlined in the plan, but one said that these were inadequately defined. Several delegations called for greater support to education and suggested that educational methods be evaluated and the quality of education monitored. UNICEF was urged to focus on the needs of the girl child and to involve women in the fight against poverty, malnutrition and food shortages. A few speakers suggested that more attention be paid to children in especially difficult circumstances and children

in emergency situations, and recommended that armed conflicts be monitored. Another speaker supported the UNICEF approach in Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States and said that more attention should go to children in countries in transition. One delegation said that since UNICEF could not do everything, the setting of priorities was very important.

48. Many delegations expressed concern about the trend of declining resources to Africa, especially West and Central Africa. They also expressed support for the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. In response to queries on how the Special Initiative for Africa fit into the MTP and what UNICEF would contribute to the Initiative, the secretariat said that a separate briefing would be organized later in the week for Board members on the UNICEF response to the Initiative.

49. A number of delegations stressed that strategic planning and evaluation were essential to achieve goals and sustain progress. Lessons learned from immunization and other programmes in the past should be applied in achieving the World Summit goals. One delegation proposed that key indicators be developed for monitoring and evaluation. One speaker mentioned that the impact of efficiency was not adequately emphasized in the MTP and requested the secretariat to monitor programme efficiency and effectiveness. Several delegations encouraged UNICEF to develop quantitative targets and create benchmarks to measure progress and allocate funds. The secretariat responded that UNICEF would learn lessons from the mid-decade review and from country programmes and would continue to improve strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation of quantitative as well as qualitative aspects of progress.

50. Two delegations encouraged UNICEF to work more closely with partners, especially Governments, communities and families. UNICEF was urged to collaborate with the International Labour Organisation in the campaign against child labour. A few delegations encouraged UNICEF to promote South-South cooperation.

51. Several speakers said that they fully agreed with the guiding principles of human resources development. Teamwork and a people-centred approach were essential for sustainability. UNICEF was encouraged to develop policies on gender and geographic balance of human resources and on staff recruitment. In response to concerns raised about the cost of human resources, the secretariat said that such costs would be closely monitored and reminded Board members that the quality of programmes depended on the quality of people, and investment was needed to raise the quality and competence of staff members.

52. One delegation said that the three criteria used by UNICEF in allocating its general resources were good, but inadequate, and that more valuable and mixed indicators should be identified to allocate resources more equally. Another delegation expressed mixed views about using the criteria and requested information on quality control measures in using programme funds. One speaker said that while the Mission Statement said that priorities would go to the most disadvantaged children and the countries in greatest need, this was not reflected in resource allocations, especially to African countries. While expressing appreciation for the criteria, one delegation suggested that when using gross national product per capita, UNICEF should also consider disparities in communities. Another delegation said that the allocation of resources should be based on priorities set by recipient Governments. The secretariat shared Board members' concerns and said that the criteria should be objective, understandable and fair. The secretariat looked forward to discussions on resource allocation at the September session.

53. Many delegations expressed concern about the decline of general resources and urged the secretariat to develop strategies to increase contributions to general resources. They also called on industrialized countries in particular to increase commitments to general resources. It was suggested that given the fact that donor contributions to general resources had declined, the secretariat should try increasingly to raise resources in countries with fund-raising potential. While one speaker welcomed the secretariat's efforts in considering some middle-income countries as potential donors, another said that UNICEF should be careful not to withdraw too soon from some middle-income countries because opportunities to consolidate achievements in these countries might be lost. He suggested that regional disparities be adequately considered in phasing out assistance to countries. One speaker said that the 20/20 initiative deserved serious consideration in the MTP. The Executive Director replied that a working group had been set up to review various aspects of issues related to resources.

54. One delegation asked whether UNICEF would support a third kind of presence in countries in addition to country offices and National Committees. The delegation supported the importance given to National Committees and hoped that UNICEF would improve its collaboration with them. The Executive Director welcomed the comments and said that UNICEF had held some healthy and frank discussions with National Committees on increasing general resources. The type of UNICEF presence in a country was based on the local situation; it could be a full country office, a self-financed office or a National Committee.

Financial medium-term plan for the period 1996-1999

55. One delegation asked what criteria were used to allocate administrative and programme support funds to field offices. The secretariat explained that all field offices with regular country programmes had their administrative and programme support costs funded from the administrative and programme support budget. Liaison offices and offices with shorter-term programmes had, for the time being, their programme support costs charged to the programme budget. When the integrated budget was prepared for the entire organization, the basis of allocation would be made clear, with harmonized definitions for programme assistance, programme support and management and administration.

56. One delegation asked if MEP would produce "efficiency dividends" and if such dividends could be quantified and monitored. Another delegation said that the MTP did not sufficiently take into account MEP initiatives such as decentralization to field offices and the strengthened role of internal audit. The secretariat stated that MEP should enable UNICEF to have a more effective and efficient organization and it continued to aim at maximizing resources available for county programmes. Some investments in staff training and new systems would be necessary in the short term to achieve future efficiencies. Savings from streamlining in the recently approved integrated budget for headquarters and regional offices had been used to cover the costs of the Programme Manager System (PROMS), the United Nations Integrated Management Information System and the regional office for Central Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States.

57. One delegation said that the section of the financial medium-term plan comparing the financial performance for 1995 to the plan was straightforward and easy to understand. However, a summary table would make the variances from the plan even clearer.

58. One delegation asked why emergency contributions were expected to decline. The secretariat said that it sincerely hoped the assumption of fewer emergencies

proved to be correct. However, emergency contributions were very difficult to forecast because of the unpredictable nature of emergencies.

59. Many delegations were concerned about the slow growth forecast in general resources and the increasing proportion of UNICEF income coming from supplementary funds contributions. Several delegations said that general resources were the most important component of country programmes and stressed the importance of multilateral assistance. One delegation said that the decline in general resources could harm the attainment of the goals for the year 2000 and encouraged donor countries to support UNICEF in implementing the MTP. Another delegation said that the declining share of general resources was a threat to meaningful planning. While congratulating UNICEF on maintaining high donor support in times of fiscal restraint, one delegation suggested that general resources fund-raising could be enhanced by more transparent reporting on the use of general resources. Several delegations suggested that the secretariat formulate fund-raising strategies to increase general resources contributions. The secretariat said that a multi-divisional/multi-office working group was examining fund-raising issues, including the question of how to provide better and clearer information to donors. The secretariat also drew the attention of delegations to document E/ICEF/1996/CRP.20, which showed how much each donor is contributing to general resources and supplementary funds.

60. Some delegations said that UNICEF should encourage fund-raising in developing countries for use in the same countries. One delegation agreed with this, but cautioned that UNICEF should still put its priority on fund-raising in donor countries. Another delegation agreed since the generation of funds in-country through the private sector was not feasible in some countries. Because achievements might not yet be consolidated, one delegation cautioned UNICEF to not withdraw financial support from countries too soon. One delegation said that whatever presence UNICEF had in a country, the country itself must be consulted.

61. Asked if there was a strategy to increase the fund-raising capacity of National Committees, the secretariat said that it was continuing to work closely with them. As an example, the secretariat said that there was a good open discussion between National Committees and UNICEF at their recent Annual Meeting at which many strategies were discussed, including the need to raise additional general resources.

62. One delegation said that staff costs should not increase at the expense of country programmes. The secretariat agreed, but also observed that the programmatic mix was changing over time, and in some countries where UNICEF was now mainly providing technical advisory assistance, people constituted the programme. In those instances, the quality of the people determined the quality of the programmes.

63. Some delegations noted that the financial medium-term plan assumed a growth rate of 2 per cent in administrative and programme support costs for 1998 and 1999. Some suggested that there should be a no growth assumption for those expenditures. One delegation said that substantial savings could be made through organizational change. The secretariat said that the MTP was not a budget authorization document but a planning document, and there would be time for the Executive Board to discuss fully the integrated budgets for 1998 and 1999 when they were presented to the Executive Board in 1997. While trying to keep administrative and programme support costs to a minimum, the secretariat still felt that it was prudent to show a 2 per cent growth because even with fewer staff, overall staff costs could rise when the United Nations increased

salary scales, including salaries for local field office staff. A 2 per cent growth assumption was less than the assumed inflation rate.

64. Two delegations said that they supported the strengthening of human resources management, especially the idea of using teams.

65. One delegation supported the use of information technology and noted that although an initial investment might be required, it would lead to efficiency later.

66. One delegation said that the secretariat should continue to keep general resources cash balances at the liquidity guideline levels. The secretariat noted that the general resources cash balances had decreased and now it would be important to maintain adequate resources. (See chap. IV, decision 1996/26, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

D. Review of UNICEF policies and strategies on child protection

67. The Executive Board discussed the review of UNICEF policies and strategies on child protection (E/ICEF/1996/14) under agenda item 6. The report was introduced by Stephen Lewis, Deputy Executive Director. Many delegations addressed this agenda item.

68. The report was well received, and several delegations praised the high quality of the paper in terms of historical perspective, analysis and its emphasis on a cross-sectoral approach. Moreover, there was strong support in the Board for the child rights perspective guiding the proposed programme strategies and the synergy with overall implementation efforts for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A number of delegations noted, however, that there is need for further clarification of the overall role of UNICEF in implementation of the Convention. It was pointed out that child protection encompasses all children, whereas the paper is specifically concerned with children in extreme situations of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Consequently, it was proposed that the term "child protection" be replaced by the term "children in need of special protection measures". In this regard, cooperation with other partners, including support to the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, was stressed.

69. With regard to the strategies outlined in the paper, a number of delegations endorsed the paper as providing an appropriate framework for the development of specific strategies based on a broadened situation analysis process, best practice and research. Several delegations indicated that a report on relevant programmatic approaches and implementation plans would be welcome as they are developed. In this connection, concerns related to UNICEF capacities to enhance responses to children in need of special protection measures were raised. (See chap. IV, decision 1996/27, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

E. Conceptual framework for UNICEF emergency interventions

70. The Executive Board had before it a report on "A conceptual framework for UNICEF emergency interventions" (E/ICEF/1996/16). The Executive Director made some introductory remarks, which were followed by a short introduction of the report by the Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes, who emphasized the importance of the role of the family in determining child vulnerability and well-being, and the concomitant implications for UNICEF emergency interventions.

71. Reactions of the delegations to the paper varied. A number of delegations expressed appreciation for the quality of the paper, noting that it was concise and specific. Several other delegations stated that the conceptual framework was too general in scope and expressed the hope that the some clarification would emerge from the eight operational papers. One speaker noted that the precise purpose of the paper had not been sufficiently clarified, and others felt that there was a difference of perception between the Board delegations themselves and the secretariat as to what was requested.

72. One speaker said that his delegation would revisit the guiding principles and methodology of UNICEF after receipt of all the operational papers.

73. Many delegations noted that the paper did not adequately address UNICEF cooperation, coordination and collaboration with other United Nations partners, especially with DHA. They strongly urged that this be covered in the forthcoming papers. One delegation applauded UNICEF work with NGOs in the field, whereas others requested an enunciation of UNICEF-assisted projects undertaken by NGOs. One speaker requested that UNICEF make its Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with UNHCR and other partners more specific. Other speakers noted that there was a need to include the comparative advantage of UNICEF with respect to other agencies.

74. One delegation asked that the paper include a clear definition of emergencies, and a number of other delegations requested a need to include other kinds of emergencies apart from armed conflicts, especially "silent emergencies", that were associated with poverty-related issues. Others expressed the need for clearer articulation of emergency and development projects and stressed the inclusion of systematic evaluations of UNICEF projects. One delegation remarked that the paper needed to examine sustainable development and focus on continuity of action as emergency situations continued long after conflicts had ceased. Another speaker mentioned that the document should link emergencies to long-term goals and strategies and cover the transition to the rehabilitation phase.

75. One speaker requested the inclusion of a conceptual distinction between UNICEF actions in emergencies and the protection of children in especially difficult circumstances. He continued that what was also needed was an elaboration of the circumstances under which UNICEF would be assuming responsibility for the needs and protection of children, and questioned how UNICEF would capitalize on its mandate to ensure the survival, protection and development of children - especially refugee and returnee children. Another speaker requested the addition of a chapter on "analysing causes and identifying protection" to be taken into account when redrafting the conceptual framework. One delegation said that the response to deliberate targeting of children, their rape, and physical and psycho-social trauma should move beyond emergency action to the larger area of protection. Another delegation raised the question as to what would be undertaken by UNICEF in order to prevent emergencies from occurring.

76. Some delegations expressed concern about the proportion of overall resources assigned to emergencies and how UNICEF would set its resource mobilization priorities.

77. Two delegations mentioned that emergency actions should have Government support and assist local governments. Another speaker noted that many countries had no plan of action for emergencies and asked UNICEF to explain its role of advocate, especially in sensitive situations.

78. Several delegations requested further clarification of selected paragraphs in the paper. One delegation noted that paragraphs 13, 14 and 16 had little to do with natural disasters and another suggested that paragraphs 4 and 9 include internally displaced persons and unaccompanied children. Some delegations asked that paragraph 8 exclude reference to the earlier paper presented at the first regular session in January.

79. One speaker questioned how UNICEF would address the factors causing political instability in its forthcoming papers. Another delegation pronounced the need for international assistance to assist in the resettlement of internally displaced families.

80. Many delegations suggested that they would like to receive the papers well in advance of the Board so that their comments could be included before finalization. In that connection, one delegation noted that since a few donor Governments shared the disproportional burden of providing aid for emergencies, they hoped that their comments would be taken into account before finalization of the operational papers.

81. The Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes thanked the delegations for their constructive comments. He said that the report was a part of an ongoing process and that different components of the process were to be presented at future Board sessions. He assured delegations that all papers would be presented to them in advance and that the conceptual framework would be linked to the operational papers.

82. Responding specifically to the series of comments made by the various delegations, the Director assured them that the papers would elucidate the various types of emergencies, the role of UNICEF in emergency situations and its relationship with DHA in the areas of coordination and cooperation. He assured delegations that the papers would examine common concerns of children affected by poverty and loud emergencies and would attempt to draw upon linkages from both. The papers would examine mechanisms aimed at strengthening UNICEF collaborative efforts with other agencies and NGOs, and would include UNICEF analysis and assessment processes focusing on the needs and rights of children. The papers would incorporate causes of disruption, displacement and threats to health which are common to children and would be presented as quickly as possible. He also assured delegations that UNICEF would continue to work with national authorities, but also where Governments no longer had de facto control, UNICEF would continue to work with community groups and local authorities.

83. The Director noted the comments made with regard to paragraph 8 and promised that further clarification would follow. He recognized that given the long-term presence before, during and after emergencies, there was a strong need to focus on early warning and preparedness, and assured delegations that UNICEF would continue to play a role in the post-conflict phase. Finally, he informed that UNICEF looked forward to a process of discussion with Board members prior to the next session. (See chap. IV, decision 1996/28, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

F. Greeting Card and related Operations

84. The Executive Board had before it the GCO work plan and proposed budget for 1996 (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.11) for approval, and the GCO financial report and accounts for the year ended 30 April 1995 (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.12). The first document included a draft resolution to change the GCO fiscal year from 1 May-30 April to 1 January-31 December.

85. The reports were introduced by the Acting Director, GCO, who also made a presentation on GCO, its performance in the past year and its key strategies and objectives for 1996. The presentation outlined the positive changes taking place in GCO, including the recruitment of a new Director, who is expected to join the division in August or September 1996. The secretariat is making the final selection of a private sector consultant company to undertake the external review of UNICEF cards and products. The company selected will have a presence in both Europe and North America, and the Acting Director, GCO, outlined the scope of the review.

86. The Acting Director, GCO, thanked the tens of thousands of volunteers for their pivotal role in the success of card and product sales and in raising the profile of UNICEF. Through advocacy work they have helped to contribute to a better understanding in industrialized countries of the needs of children and women in developing countries and to global solidarity. Many delegations also praised the work of volunteers world-wide.

87. Many speakers commended GCO and its staff for income generated during the past fiscal year in association with its sales partners and the resulting revenue growth achieved. More than 30 per cent of total UNICEF income is mobilized through GCO. One delegation said that GCO is one of the means by which UNICEF can generate funds, improve education and mobilize people throughout the world for the benefit of children.

88. Several delegations noted that the majority of net income, in both absolute and percentage terms, was generated from private sector fund-raising. In those countries where the potential for private sector fund-raising exists, but is prohibited, it was recommended that the Executive Director be given the power to intervene.

89. Many delegations expressed concern that greeting card and product sales are stagnating despite the fact that there is capacity for sales growth, and the question was raised as to whether stagnation was industry-wide. Several delegations expressed concern at decreasing profitability and increasing operating costs. Other delegations thanked GCO for its efforts to address problem areas that had been raised by the Executive Board in the past, such as improved service to customers and the adoption of a more consultative and supportive stance towards National Committees.

90. Several delegations said that the GCO name is no longer appropriate and that management should consider changing the name to properly reflect its activities.

91. Although the substantial part of GCO income from product sales is generated from markets served by the Geneva office, more staff are located in New York. Several speakers were of the opinion that GCO staff should be located where decision-making involving major business partners and markets takes place. One delegation noted that regional support centre operations may not be cost-effective and requested that GCO management study the value of their continued presence.

92. Some delegations recommended that future GCO work plan and budget documents be shorter, more user-friendly, business-like and transparent. Some speakers said that the document placed too much emphasis on the number of greeting cards sold in relation to the amount of income generated from this activity. They requested a greater focus on priorities and new developments.

93. One delegation said that they had shifted emphasis from supplementary funds to general resources and urged other National Committees to do likewise. They offered support to the secretariat to take action on this issue and requested it to provide National Committees with information on UNICEF programmes funded from both general resources and supplementary funds.

94. On the change of the GCO fiscal year, many delegations supported the GCO proposal in the interest of enhanced transparency, despite the fact that the figures from card and products sales would reflect provisional results. In this context, one delegation said that such a change should be made only on the understanding that it could be worked out practically by accountants and auditors.

95. Many delegations welcomed the external review of UNICEF cards and products and hoped that it would be intrusive and all-encompassing, with a special focus on the structures and processes based on best industry practices in order to help the UNICEF Executive Board assess future growth and find ways to further maximize the income from the sale of cards and products. It was requested that the review be carried out in consultation with National Committees which should also be kept informed of the outcome.

96. In response to questions on the external review of UNICEF cards and products, the Director, GCO, confirmed that the review will begin in July. It will focus essentially on cards and products. The processes are complex and highly specialized and need careful review in order to be accelerated and streamlined. However, it is hoped that both GCO income-generating areas would be strengthened by the outcome of the review. Any proposed changes in the structure of GCO in relation to cards and products will take into account the interface with the Private Sector Fund-raising group. The Acting Director, GCO, said that many topics raised by delegations at the present session, such as stagnating sales of cards and products, parameters for both Market Development Programme and Fund-raising Development Programme funds, the viability of the 50 per cent profitability target, improved structures to accelerate and streamline operations, best industry practices, maximizing return on investments, reducing operational costs and location of operations would be studied in the context of the external review. An oral status report will be presented to the Executive Board at its regular third session in September as the final report is expected to be completed only in late autumn/early winter.

97. Many delegations and the Executive Director thanked the Acting Director, GCO, for accepting the position at short notice and for providing valuable leadership to GCO staff. The Executive Director also expressed her thanks to delegations for their constructive comments and expressed the hope that all UNICEF consultancies would provide guidance that, together with strong management and leadership, would allow UNICEF to move forward in a positive way. (See chap. IV, decision 1996/22, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

G. Progress report on the Management Excellence Programme

98. The Executive Director introduced the progress report (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.9), informing the Board that management excellence project teams had completed their work, signifying the end of the proposal development phase, and that much of the responsibility for moving forward with management excellence could now be transferred to line managers throughout the organization. Since this document was prepared, significant meetings had taken place, including the Annual Meeting of National Committees, the Executive Board

inter-sessional and individual briefings with Board members, from which the secretariat had greatly benefited.

99. On the role of regional offices, the Executive Director reminded the Board that UNICEF has always been a decentralized organization and that proposals coming forward are not about creating new structures. UNICEF has regional offices in seven regions, six of which have been in existence for some time. She clarified that UNICEF is trying to ensure that its structures support and strengthen country programmes. The Executive Director expressed her strong belief on the need for regional offices in the field close to where the action is. Proposals will be made to clarify the role of those offices in order to give them clearly defined accountability for the overall performance of offices in each region and the responsibility to provide the technical and managerial support that country offices need. It is envisaged that this will also create a more realistic span of supervision throughout the organization and reinforce the principle that decisions must be taken closest to the action. The Executive Director stated that the ultimate aim is to strengthen the development and monitoring of country programmes and ensure that they reflect country and regional priorities within the overall parameters of global policies. She highlighted that by clarifying the role of regional offices, UNICEF will also be able to streamline the New York office so that it can focus on those things that are appropriately the role of headquarters: shaping the strategic programme vision of the organization and evaluating the programme experience; developing the standards for the sound management of all UNICEF assets; providing leadership for effective human resources practices; monitoring organizational performance; ensuring global connectivity and the systems to support a decentralized organization; developing strategic partnerships and mobilizing resources at the global level to support the organization's work for children; and maintaining the inter-agency relationships that are essential for UNICEF as a member of the United Nations family. The Executive Director assured members of the Board that she is committed to implementing the reforms within overall existing budget ceilings.

100. The Chairperson of GSA addressed the meeting after which several delegations expressed appreciation for staff commitment to ensuring the success of MEP. References were made by many delegations on the critical importance of staff participation as a necessary element for bringing about changes. One delegation inquired whether improvements in staff morale had occurred, to which the secretariat responded that efforts were under way to improve morale through fostering of more collegial relationships, working in teams, and staff involvement in the global, regional and country management teams.

101. A number of delegations expressed their positive appraisal of the report on progress made to date. They appreciated the references made linking Booz•Allen & Hamilton recommendations with management excellence activities and the timetable outlining when recommendations will be brought to the Board for policy discussion and budgetary decisions. A few speakers questioned why the timetable was not more explicit, with clearer cross-references to the body of the report.

102. Several speakers expressed appreciation for the secretariat's efforts to engage the Board in ongoing dialogue on management excellence, making special reference to inter-sessional meetings and individual briefings. One delegation stated that there had been a radical change in credibility of the secretariat owing to the consultative process employed. Other speakers expressed appreciation for MEP being a highly consultative process with UNICEF staff, National Committees and the Executive Board.

103. One delegation was concerned with the slow pace of translating Booz•Allen & Hamilton recommendations into action. Another delegation requested that efforts be made to accelerate progress, especially in relation to clarifying roles and accountabilities of headquarters, regional and country offices.

104. Many delegations acknowledged progress in specific areas such as integrated budgets, consolidation of publications functions, reduction in headquarters expenditures, PROMS, better coordination in the United Nations system and cooperation with UNAIDS. The work on integrated budgets was described as facilitating better management of resources and enhanced transparency. One speaker requested early implementation of PROMS organization-wide for improved programme management, accountability and transparency. Another speaker expressed caution on the reliance on global connectivity in countries with unreliable levels of technologies.

105. One delegation praised results to date on the UNICEF MEP, describing it as unique within the United Nations system, thereby providing a reference point for overall United Nations reform.

106. A few speakers were pleased with office-level initiatives for management improvements. One delegation inquired whether networking systems had been established for offices to see what others are doing and for accessing guidelines for office improvement plans. Another speaker expressed appreciation for significant improvements in the UNICEF office located in his country, resulting in the reduction of 40 posts and substantial savings redirected into programmes. Two delegations suggested that attention be paid to ensure harmony between office improvement initiatives and overall management excellence objectives. One speaker stated that attention should be paid to improvements in country offices in terms of information technology strategies, the introduction of PROMS and integrated budgets. Another delegation highlighted the office improvements efforts as good mechanisms for improving staff morale and efficiencies.

107. Several speakers expressed support for the existing decentralized structure of UNICEF with the country programme at its core. Clearly defined roles for headquarters and regional offices, which add value and avoid duplication with country offices, was seen as a sound approach. A number of delegations requested further clarification and debate on the proposed role and functions of the regional offices. Two speakers felt that regional bureaux should be in New York, allowing experts to serve several regions at the same time, thus avoiding duplication; but several others felt that regional offices should remain in the regions. Three speakers expressed hesitation on the supervision of country representatives by regional directors, with one suggesting that this could only be effective if regional offices have oversight functions on the use of funds. One speaker questioned whether there are changes anticipated in the number and location of regional offices, to which the secretariat responded that no changes were foreseen in the number or location of regional offices at the present time.

108. One delegation requested that the role of regional offices be clearly explained in terms of value added to the country programme. A speaker asked for an analysis of how the roles and functions of the country office would be helped or affected by proposals on the role of regional offices and how these proposals would work in light of the need for United Nations coordination as reflected in General Assembly resolution 48/162 and the triennial review. Two delegations inquired whether the further decentralization of functions to the field would result in cost reductions and fewer posts in New York.

109. The Executive Director responded that strengthening the capacity of regional offices did not imply increases in budgets and numbers of staff, but would imply a streamlining of functions in New York. She reminded Board members that there would be no proposals for changing the overall structure of UNICEF, with its country offices, regional offices and headquarters, but rather that proposals would clarify the specific roles and accountabilities for each location as part of the overall UNICEF system. The need for UNICEF to take better advantage of the expertise available throughout the organization, as well as from sister United Nations agencies, NGOs and other partners, and to learn from practical experience of country programmes was highlighted by the secretariat.

110. The establishment of management teams at country, regional and global levels as a new element of the UNICEF structure was supported by several delegations, as was the use of a mechanisms for staff participation in the development of policies and strategies. One delegation suggested that the management teams at all levels assume responsibility for ensuring broad participation. Questions were raised on standards for the teams and costs for travel, and it was suggested that the management teams make use of information technologies to reduce the need for frequent meetings and travel.

111. On relations with National Committees, many Board members supported closer relationships between UNICEF and National Committees. They felt, however, that it was essential to listen to the views of the National Committees, especially on the need to maintain their current independent NGO status. It was felt that their independence is essential to their advocacy and fund-raising roles, requiring a status for relations with their own Boards and civil society.

112. Many speakers stated their agreement with the response made by National Committees at their Annual Meeting. One delegation requested that the report of the Annual Meeting be distributed to Board members. Support was also expressed for the National Committee proposal that the Geneva office be charged with managing relations with National Committees.

113. One speaker stressed the need for National Committees to be more involved in strategic discussions on future directions of UNICEF. The development of key performance indicators and better definitions of audit content for independent audits was welcomed by several speakers, while another speaker expressed interest in the proposal regarding self-financing offices.

114. The Chairperson of the Standing Group of National Committees stated that consensus had been reached at the Yverdon meeting on the need for closer cooperation with UNICEF in terms of measurement of performance and the need to preserve the individual characteristics of National Committees to represent civil society. He expressed the need for preserving the identity and autonomy of National Committees under the leadership of their respective Executive Boards. He conveyed that National Committees welcomed closer collaboration with UNICEF regions, however, recommended that a focal point be created in Geneva to manage relationships between UNICEF and National Committees, with Pacific coast country National Committees still to propose the best set up for managing their relations. He congratulated the secretariat for the quality of work done in formulating recommendations on relations with National Committees and stated their confidence in this process.

115. A request was made for proposals on managing relations with National Committees to be discussed at the next inter-sessional meeting of the Board. The secretariat agreed to the proposal, indicating that Board members would be contacted to identify an appropriate date for the meeting.

116. On proposals related to the new human resources strategy, one delegation expressed support for a judicious mix of contract and permanent staff and requested that senior appointments reflect a mix of nationalities and gender. Another speaker expressed support for new approaches to address the problem of non-performance through separation. In her response, the Executive Director pointed out that quality of performance will form the basis of the new human resources strategy, which will include assessment of performance of supervisors.

117. Regarding the external study on the UNICEF supply function, one speaker asked how new proposals would address the issue of outsourcing. The secretariat responded that UNICEF is taking outsourcing into consideration in the context of looking for the best costs possible.

118. The speaker for the NGO Committee on UNICEF stated that a mutually consultative process with NGOs was needed on programme development, implementation and evaluation, and that this should be standard practice in all country offices. A request was made for the secretariat to institutionalize the NGO consultative practice. The secretariat agreed that UNICEF needs to continue to enhance its relationships with NGOs at the country level.

119. One delegation requested information on the role of the Executive Board in the new structure. In the opening announcements, the secretariat had informed the Board of an informal meeting to cake place 27 June on relations between the Board and the secretariat.

120. Regarding the report on management excellence to be presented to the third regular session in September, requests were made for policy decisions to be clearly outlined. One speaker suggested that the paper should include such items as the decisions proposed, the planned changes and their expected results, and the time-frame for implementation. Regarding the next inter-sessional meeting, the same speaker asked that information be provided to clearly illustrate the issues supporting the decisions that need to be taken and suggested the use of audio-visuals.

121. One speaker suggested that the matrix linking Booz•Allen & Hamilton recommendations to the MEP, as contained in document E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.3 presented at the first regular session in January, be included in the next progress report, with two additional columns demonstrating management excellence findings and actions.

122. In her response, the Executive Director stated that organizational structural issues would be discussed at the September session. Board members were reminded that the discussion would not involve proposals for radical changes, but rather would focus on the clarification of roles.

123. One delegation suggested that MEP had reached a level of maturity whereby the secretariat could begin to seek ways of measuring institutional gains. In responding, the Executive Director welcomed suggestions from Board members of indicators which bilateral agencies have found useful in their own reviews. One delegation suggested the possibility of requesting Booz•Allen & Hamilton to evaluate progress since its study. The secretariat suggested that any such involvement with firms in the future should be negotiated through a competitive bidding process. The Board was also reminded of ongoing consultations among the secretariat, the United Nations Efficiency Board and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on ways to move ahead with management excellence. One delegation added that it was too early to evaluate the impact of current reform efforts.

H. Harmonization of budget presentations

124. The Comptroller and Director of the Division of Financial Management made an oral progress report on the work being carried out by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF on budget harmonization.

125. She said that in her report to the Executive Board at its second regular session in April, she had stated that a preliminary comparison of budgets identified differences between those of UNDP and UNFPA and that of UNICEF. Those differences concerned not only presentation, but also the scope and content of the budgets. It was possible that the different nature of each organization might affect the extent to which harmonization of all aspects of the budgets was desirable for the respective Executive Boards.

126. During the debates on this subject at the second regular sessions of both the UNDP/UNFPA and the UNICEF Executive Boards, one delegation had presented a comprehensive statement which was endorsed by other delegations. The statement set forth the basic purpose of harmonization and clearly identified the principles to be included in the harmonization efforts. Harmonization meant making the budgets more similar to promote understanding and support good decision-making. The similarities must go beyond content and presentation styles to encompass the underlying principles employed in the preparation of accounts and estimates. Similarity would not mean sameness.

127. The Comptroller expressed appreciation on behalf of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA for the guidance provided by the Executive Boards, in terms of both the general framework set forth for the harmonization exercise and the clarity in identifying specific aspects of harmonization that were of concern to both Boards.

128. She said that as reported to the annual session of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in May, the three organizations currently were addressing harmonization under five main headings:

(a) The key issue of scope and content, mainly because of earlier concerns of the applicability to UNFPA and UNDP of the integrated approach adopted by UNICEF for its headquarters and regional offices budget. This referred to the incorporation of programme activities in biennial budget estimates. An in-depth review of the global and interregional activities of the three organizations was being undertaken to determine the exact nature and comparability of the activities before the question of possible harmonization on the level of programme activities was addressed;

(b) An in-depth analysis to identify clearly what constitutes programme activities as opposed to activities in support of programmes. The latter group of activities would be further divided between those whose primary function is to support programmes and those whose primary function is general management and administration. The aim is to ensure that information can be compared across organizations;

(c) Common presentation styles, specifically the development of a common or fully comparable table reflecting resource utilization;

(d) Harmonization of key budgetary classifications, where the organizations currently are working on delineation and levels of aggregation for expenditure categories;

(e) Terminology for the identification of primary groupings of resources. Upon completion of the harmonization exercise, the organizations intend to submit the agreed terms with definitions to the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions for review and approval so that they can be incorporated in the Administrative Committee on Coordination glossary of financial terms.

129. The Comptroller stated that since the report to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, further progress had been made. The organizations had focused primarily and come to an agreement on the second and third areas - the development of a common resource plan and the related definitions or components to be included under each heading. It was intended that the resource plan would have three sections: (a) total resources available to the organization; (b) the use of resources, which would represent the backbone classified under three main headings (Programme activities, Programme support activities and Management and administration of the organization); and (c) a reconciliation between estimates included under the use of resources and the budget estimates.

130. An internal working paper summarizing discussions of the group and identifying the activities and units included under each proposed heading was made available to members of the UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF Executive Boards at a joint informal briefing held on 12 June. This was the first time that a joint informal session was held by the two Executive Boards. The UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board had endorsed the UNICEF Executive Board decision 1996/16 (E/ICEF/1996/12 (Part II)), adopted at the second regular session, on the timing and nature of future reports on budget harmonization.

131. Delegations expressed appreciation for and satisfaction with the progress made on harmonization by the three agencies. Most speakers welcomed the innovative joint inter-sessional meeting and encouraged the secretariat to organize more informal sessions of this nature. Delegations stressed the need for continued dialogue and consultation in view of the technical nature of the subject. One speaker remarked on the progress made since the preparation of the resource table, complete with budget amounts, which had been distributed during the joint inter-sessional meeting. The speaker said that Board members should harmonize their requests to the agencies. The Boards should concentrate on using harmonization for strategic financial management and refrain from micromanagement.

132. One delegation was pleased that the Comptroller had discussed progress made rather than provide a catalogue of difficulties encountered. However, it was difficult to assess how much progress had been made without expert advice, which was not the fault of the agencies. Although the efforts towards harmonization have been delayed, they have gained momentum and it was expected that the 1998-1999 biennial budgets would be presented using the harmonized format. This was a very important political issue for the speaker's Government, specifically for the civil servants who dealt with multilateral aid. The results of harmonization would have an impact on the balance between his country's multilateral and bilateral aid.

133. One delegation encouraged the harmonization group to consider thoroughly the applicability of integrated budgeting to UNDP and UNFPA. Integrated budgeting as initiated by UNICEF should be the format to follow. Another delegation said that the harmonization of budget presentations was advantageous to recipient Governments because it would reduce duplication of efforts by agencies and maximize the use of resources at the country level. A delegation reiterated a request to have discussion papers on this subject made available in working languages.

134. The Comptroller expressed appreciation for the comments made. She reiterated the importance of a continued dialogue between Board members and the agencies so that the secretariats could respond to specific requirements expected by the Boards from the harmonization exercise. She requested the Executive Board to provide the secretariat with further guidance on specific information expected from the agencies as a result of harmonization. Some speakers said that because of the technical nature of the subject, it would be helpful if the secretariat could prepare a list of its needs so that their missions could consult with experts from their capitals.

I. Draft report of the Secretary-General on enhancing internal oversight mechanisms in the operational funds and programmes

135. In introducing this agenda item, the President recalled that at the second regular Board session in April, delegations had an opportunity to discuss the "Draft report of the Secretary-General on enhancing internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes", and that their comments had been submitted to the Secretary-General. The Board decided to include this item on the agenda of the present session to provide delegations which were unable to comment at that time with another opportunity to do so. The secretariat was also requested to present an oral report on the current capacity of UNICEF for internal audit and oversight. The draft report was redistributed by the secretariat as document E/ICEF/1996/CRP.20.

136. Karin Sham Poo, Deputy Executive Director, presented the oral report. The purpose of the Office of Internal Audit (OIA) in UNICEF, she said, is to assist management in the effective performance of its responsibilities. Its primary role is to assist the Executive Director in her control of the organization by providing assurance that operations are well managed, or if weaknesses are identified, noting opportunities for improvement. OIA as an independent function in UNICEF, headed by a director, who reports directly to the Executive Director. The director is supported by 15 internal auditors, who are independent of the activities they audit. Internal audit staff are authorized to carry out all activities they deem necessary and have access to all areas of the organization. An office work plan is prepared and reviewed by the Internal Audit Committee and is also shared with the Board of External Auditors to facilitate collaboration and avoid duplication of work.

137. She described the scope of internal auditing, stating that the most common audit in UNICEF covers three types of audits - financial (of accounting records), operational (of organizational performance) and value-for-money (of operations, programmes and projects) - and is known as a comprehensive audit. The frequency and scope of audits is determined within a framework based on the experience and judgement of the director, with generally all major systems, functions and organizational units performing significant responsibilities examined within a period not exceeding three years.

138. The Deputy Executive Director said that the Director of OIA issues an audit report for each audit carried out, and all audit reports are shared with the Board of External Auditors. An annual summary of audit observations, highlighting significant findings, trends and reported findings which have not been satisfactorily corrected, is submitted to the Executive Director. The Deputy Executive Director explained further that the most immediate auditees are responsible for taking corrective action on audit observations; internal auditors follow up and determine that corrective action has been taken. The Executive Director has the ultimate responsibility for corrective actions not taken on reported findings.

139. In conclusion, she explained the role of the Internal Audit Committee, which is comprised of the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Directors, the Directors of Programme Division, the Division of Human Resources and OIA, and the Comptroller. The Committee meets four times per year, or more frequently if required, to review and follow up on selected internal audit reports and to ensure that appropriate corrective action or preventive actions are taken.

140. One delegation expressed reservations about the presentation and the conditions under which the presentation was made, noting that the two-page text of the oral report was in English only and was very limited in scope. He was of the opinion that the presentation was very general in nature and did not adequately reflect the work done by OIA; thus, it was not conducive to the in-depth discussion he thought would take place on this issue. For example, problems encountered by OIA in its day-to-day work, which would have enabled Board members to gain a better appreciation of how the office works in concert with other UNICEF services, were not addressed. In addition, the speaker expressed concern that the presentation also did not address such matters as how the work of this office is integrated with other secretariat bodies, how the work is actually done and whether the audit reports are taken into account elsewhere. Issues regarding the recruitment process of auditors, their duties and their career advancement opportunities were also raised by this speaker, who added that clarification of the issues he raised would allow for better insight into the work of this office.

141. The same delegation said that as UNICEF would be providing input for the Secretary-General's report, the Executive Board should be kept fully apprised of the nature of the input in a summary fashion before it is submitted to the Secretary-General. He commented further about the need to make fuller use of the experience gained in auditing a variety of activities and for that information to be communicated to the Board in a summary presentation.

142. Another delegation supported those comments and requested the secretariat not to set a new precedent by submitting oral reports on issues as important as this one, issues that require an in-depth analysis on the part of Board members. She recalled that at the April Board session, her delegation had questioned the wisdom of the submitting comments of Board members on the Secretary-General's report before they had an opportunity to discuss the secretariat's views and where they felt auditing within UNICEF should properly be focused. In conclusion, she said that the oral report did not provide enough information to allow the Board to arrive at a decision.

143. The Executive Director said that, while she appreciated the concern expressed by the speakers, she considered that OIA was very important for UNICEF and she understood that the secretariat had been requested to describe the activities of office. She said that there would be a new Director of OIA, and she was looking to improve the quality of work of the office. This would allow UNICEF to identify some of the trends and some of the areas that have been strengthened, as well as those areas that need improvement. She looked forward to coming back to the Board on this matter in the future, but she requested delegations to allow time for the new director to begin to shape a new era. The secretariat would then be able to respond more specifically to some of the issues raised.

144. With respect to this being an oral report, the Executive Director recalled to delegations the General Assembly resolution that encouraged more issues to be presented on an oral basis. She added that this would allow the secretariat to provide the Board with the latest information.

145. The Executive Director said that she takes the role of OIA very seriously as it is a role that can be very important in assisting any head of an office in attempting to identify not only wrongdoing, if it exists, but also to prevent it from occurring. She said that she hoped the time would come when audit would not only identify issues, but work consistently with the secretariat to identify ways to resolve them. In conclusion, she stated that the secretariat had decided that, at least in the interim, the investigation capacity of UNICEF, where investigations were needed, would be better served by using the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

J. Update of the audit of the Kenya country office

146. The Executive Director made an oral report on the status of the audit follow-up. She said that she had recently gone to Kenya and met staff and donors. The programme had been on "hold", but there is now good progress. There was a mid-term review in May and an agreement to restructure the programme. She said that the progress report was given orally, but a follow-up audit is scheduled in September 1996, and a written report will be made available to the Board at its first regular session in January 1997.

147. Of the 67 audit recommendations, 36 were finalized and 31 were in various stages of progress. Thirty staff had been separated, 23 were summarily dismissed, 5 had resigned and 2 contracts not renewed. Files had been turned over to the local authorities for possible criminal prosecution. The situation with two suppliers who had been overpaid by $80,000 had been settled. The three remaining donor reports were completed and donors had been invited to attend the luncheon briefing.

148. A delegation asked to see a written report and have information on the additional checks and balances that had been put into place. The same delegation also asked if other offices had audit investigation reports and which ones and requested a copy of the NGO agreement. Another delegation said that the OIA report should be distributed to the delegations. The Executive Director commented that she would provide an executive summary with specificity. Regarding whether other audits had identified problems, she was unaware of any other reports that came even vaguely close to the level of the Kenya country office audit.

K. Reports on the meetings of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education and the UNICEF/World Health Organization Joint Committee on Health Policy

149. The Executive Board had before it the reports on the meeting of the UNESCO/UNICEF JCE, held at UNESCO Headquarters on 6 and 7 May (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.63), and on the meeting of the UNICEF/WHO JCHP, held at WHO Headquarters on 15 and 16 May (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.64). They were introduced by the President of the Board (see E/ICEF/1996/CRP.21 for the full text of his remarks).

150. Various delegations stressed the importance of UNESCO and UNICEF working together in the field of basic education, while at the same time calling for stronger and closer collaboration to avoid overlapping or uncoordinated actions. It was underscored that meetings of the joint committee are key to enhancing professional dialogue and continued improvement in the planning and implementation of joint education activities between both organizations.

151. Three specific issues contained in the JCE recommendations were highlighted: (a) the call for stronger school-community partnership and for increased awareness of civil societies of the need to shoulder their responsibility in handling basic education; (b) the thrust towards improved educational statistics and the availability of more reliable information in the education sector in general; and (c) the importance of ensuring a sound educational component within emergency situations, an often overlooked aspect in the handling of such situations. It was strongly recommended that UNESCO and UNICEF ensure that intensive consultation are held with countries for both the definition and implementation of these and other joint activities. The need to go beyond general issues and to specify the linkages between JCE and education reform process at the country level was mentioned. (See chap. IV, decision 1996/23, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

152. Participants underscored the problem of the late arrival of the documentation which, they said, impeded a thorough study and analysis of both the JCE and the JCHP reports. Therefore, following the request of various delegations, it was agreed to revisit such reports at the third regular session in September.

153. Four delegations commented on the JCHP report, all stressing the importance of maintaining an effective relationship between UNICEF and WHO. One delegation stressed in particular the complementarity of the UNICEF and WHO missions, and recommended that relations between the two agencies at the technical level could be further strengthened with the establishment of the consolidated Health Section at UNICEF headquarters.

154. All delegations referred to the importance of the JCHP process, but two speakers questioned how the UNICEF Executive Board could best address the issues raised in the meetings of joint committees, and it was agreed that this topic would be discussed at the upcoming September Board session.

155. One delegation also raised the issue of the need for a more optimal United Nations response to coordinating health action, with the involvement of the World Bank and UNFPA as important partners with UNICEF and WHO. Another speaker expressed the view that the report was not sufficiently forward-looking, along the lines of the recently-approved UNICEF health strategy. One delegation highlighted the section on women's health and lessons learned as important features of the report. Two delegations expressed concern about the low level of progress on maternal and reproductive health. One of those delegations said that, in looking at the successes and failures of the past, there should be a sense of urgency about moving forward to reach the goals through continued collaborative efforts between UNICEF and WHO. The same delegation also emphasized the need to reach a practical MOU between UNICEF and WHO on emergencies in order to clarify roles and to enable each agency to reach its full potential in these situations.

156. The secretariat welcomed and noted the views of the Executive Board and reiterated that this first JCHP meeting for the new Executive Director had been extremely productive in consolidating a close relationship between the two agencies. It felt that a focus on both effective district health systems and a more integrated approach to the health of children and women were well in line with the new UNICEF health strategy. It confirmed its readiness to discuss at the next session the question raised as to how issues from joint committees should be addressed by the Executive Board. (See chap. IV, decision 1996/24, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

L. Report of the Working Group on Documentation

157. The "Interim report of the Working Group on Documentation" (E/ICEF/1996/17) was introduced by the delegate of France who represents the French linguistic group in the Western Group. He reported that the working group had expended considerable effort over the past few months dealing primarily with the length of documents, the time-frame for their submission to the United Nations Office of Conference and Support Services and the prerequisites for the electronic transfer of documents to delegations. The working group had agreed that the secretariats concerned (UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF) should reduce document lengths to the page limits set by the General Assembly, i.e., 24 or 36 pages.

158. Speaking on behalf of his delegation, he suggested that the consideration of lengthy documents which would not be available in all languages within the six-week rule could be postponed to a later session of the Board. He called for documentation to be more precise, concise and analytical, pointing to the possibility of putting detailed statistics in addenda to the main document. While beyond the mandate of the working group, he stated that it would be useful for the Board to reorganize its work schedule to enable the secretariat to better prepare the documentation in a timely fashion. Finally, he suggested that the secretariat could assist countries lacking the resources to receive documents electronically by using its field office network to transmit documents to Board member capitals.

159. Another delegation was of the view that the Board should reduce the overall amount of documentation. The Board should systematically examine the documents requested and scheduled to assess whether all were necessary and which could be combined. He stated that this could be addressed by the working group on Board/secretariat relations. Regarding the simultaneous distribution in all languages, he saw no reason to wait for all language versions to be able to receive available copies. He pointed out that the electronic transfer of documentation does not require very costly investment.

160. One delegation commended UNICEF for an excellent record, while maintaining that there was still room for improvement. While fully aware of the importance of the simultaneous distribution of documents, none the less he underscored the need to retain some flexibility regarding the circulation of advance copies where unavoidable, and of the major documents as soon as possible in the three working languages.

161. A fourth delegation acknowledged the secretariat's efforts to expedite the simultaneous distribution of documents and reiterated her delegations' concern that even if electronic transmission to her capital were made possible through UNICEF, it would be useless if not in language versions.

162. The Secretary of the Board read out the decision on this agenda item recently adopted by the UNDP Executive Board which encouraged the working group to finalize its work and submit recommendations to the third regular session in September. (See the chap. IV, decision 1996/25, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

M. Presentation of the 1996 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award

163. The President and the Executive Director made brief statements congratulating the Centre régional pour le développement et la santé (CREDESA) (Regional Centre for Health and Development) of Benin on its selection as winner

of the 1996 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award. Professor Alinouhou accepted the award on behalf of CREDESA.

N. Other matters

Board members field visit

164. The report on the field visits of Executive Board members to Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan from 20 April to 3 May 1996 (E/ICEF/1996/CRP.23) was introduced by the team leader and Vice-Chairman of the Board, who concentrated on the four major groups of problems: (a) the nature of UNICEF programme interventions in the two countries; (b) inter-agency coordination and cooperation; (c) area-wide organization, structure, personnel and administration; and (d) budget issues.

165. He said that during the field trip, the team gained very useful insight into the work of UNICEF. The extensive and excellent programme put together by the UNICEF staff in the area office and sub-offices, with many project visits and dialogue with local authorities at all levels, gave the team a good opportunity to get a closer look at what is happening in these two countries. In that context, the mission team expressed its appreciation to all involved in the preparations of the field visits - officials at both government and local levels from the two countries visited and the UNICEF staff at headquarters and in the Central Asian Republics and Kazakstan (CARK) Area Office.

166. The speaker noted that after having two-year "bridging" programmes covering the period 1993-1994 for all five CARK countries, UNICEF developed and the Executive Board approved in 1995 full-pledged five-year country programmes for the area which reflected all the major needs of children in these countries.

167. In light of the above, the presence of UNICEF seems legitimate for the time being during the period of transition. Programmes meet Government priorities and, to a large extent, assistance goes to the most needy groups and regions. Central and local authorities seem to understand their situation very well and appreciate the work of UNICEF.

168. The 1995-1999 programmes for the CARK countries were shaped over the general UNICEF strategy mold of delivery of services, capacity-building, empowerment and advocacy, all implemented within the traditional social sectors of maternal and child health, nutrition, education, and water and sanitation, including an emphasis on the "decade goals". While the bridging programmes were to a large extent, made up of deliveries geared towards emergencies, far more emphasis is now rightly put on capacity-building, empowerment and advocacy.

169. The country programme recommendations (CPRs) for the five CARK countries were presented in 1995 under an area-wide strategy. Given that all five countries share the same political and economic past, including the same social system, and now have to face the same challenges of structural changes as described above, and given the relatively modest resources allocated by UNICEF, it seemed appropriate to build on these similarities in the programming. Although the countries have their own CPRs, the major problems and the programmes geared to these problems link the countries and make the use of funds more efficient: area-wide dissemination of plans for projects and activities; operational trials for projects beginning in one country; training and orientation; open communication between UNICEF offices and national organizations; and the Aral Sea project. The mission team found it easier to understand the argument regarding value added in this area approach and more convincing than the regional approach paper presented to the Board at its second

regular session in April which, for good reasons, had to be kept on a very general level and, thus, was unable to be sensitive to local conditions. Possible future CPRs for the CARK countries may have to be more diversified as the specificities of the needs of the countries may develop in different directions.

170. The team noted that two countries have not yet produced country strategy notes. It was also mentioned that the mission team received differing impressions of United Nations coordination under the auspices of UNDP in the two countries.

171. In Kazakstan, regular formal coordination is still at an early stage. However, most agencies have recently moved to the same premises and, therefore, informal coordination is now possible. The UNICEF project office moved from the provisional office in hotel rooms to separate UNICEF facilities in 1994. To the extent that there are significant cost savings, moving to common premises should be considered.

172. In Kyrgyzstan, United Nations coordination under the leadership of the UNDP resident representative seems to be well established and functioning well. United Nations agencies and other donors meet frequently and regularly. Also in Kyrgyzstan, a new civil society is only now emerging. UNICEF plays an active role in support of this development. The country has a rich array of NGOs; as many as 250 organizations have sprung up over the last few years. Not all of them are NGOs in the customary sense of the word, however. Often, the social basis of an organization is unclear or totally absent. UNICEF provides assistance to the "Kyrgyz Children's Fund" which is involved in several advocacy activities for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF also assists the organization in the implementation of the Social Policy Information Network, a database which provides information on local and international NGOs and their activities.

173. In Kazakstan UNICEF collaborates with a very powerful NGO, led by the First Lady, which is very efficient in fund-raising.

174. When the mission team arrived in Kazakstan, a certain scepticism existed regarding why the area office had been located outside the area and to what extent it was a rational set-up. The team made the following observations. When the operation was approved in 1993, a large emergency operation for Afghanistan was being run from Islamabad (the present area representative for CARK was at that time also representative to Afghanistan). The area office has a strong group of professionals led by an area representative with a strong programme background.

175. Actually Kazakstan has decided officially to move the capital to Akmola in the centre of the country. However, it is uncertain when it will be necessary for United Nations agencies to move there.

176. The nature and scope of UNICEF activities beyond 1999 in the CARK countries are uncertain. The present set-up in the countries endows the organization with flexibility in such a situation.

177. In spite of the initial scepticism, the team's observations regarding the location of the area office demonstrate that a thorough analysis of the pros and cons would have to be carried out before a decision could be made in the event a relocation of the area office is considered in the future. However, the team felt that the use of an area office model appeared to be a flexible and rational choice in the present situation, which is marked by change and uncertainty.

178. In that context, it was mentioned that area-wide activities should be considered as subregional activities to complement and support the work of the newly established regional office in Geneva.

179. The team stressed the importance of identifying budget-related issues at the country level that should be taken into account as work towards the integration of country offices into the budget and overall United Nations budget harmonization continues.

180. Finally, the speaker discussed issues of planning of Executive Board member field visits. Board members should have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the work of UNICEF in countries where UNICEF has only recently begun operations. The team recommends that the planning phase of field trips begin well in advance of departure and that participants be involved at an early stage to help in developing the specific terms of reference for the visit. Meetings with the relevant desk officer at headquarters at an early stage could provide useful input into this planning process. It was also found important that the general terms of reference for field trips be used actively to provide guidance to both the team members and the relevant UNICEF offices as to the purpose and nature of the visit to ensure that legitimate expectations are met on both sides. As much relevant information as possible should be provided to the team members prior to departure, including updated organizational charts on UNICEF field offices. Likewise, through UNDP headquarters, information should be sought highlighting other United Nations and related activities in the countries to be visited.

181. The team visiting Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan was unusually large, comprising 10 members. In spite of the success of the trip, it is recommended that in future, the size of the team should be reduced to 5-6 persons to avoid overburdening the field offices, especially as regards logistics. It is also believed that a smaller team will be able to work in a more informal way to the benefit of the team itself.

182. Briefings and debriefings by the field office constitute an essential input during the field visit and should also be given high priority in future. To facilitate the report writing of future mission teams, it may be considered useful to develop a prototype of the framework for the report and a check-list which could be discussed prior to departure and serve as a flexible tool of reference during the mission.

183. A member of the team supported the report of the team leader and noted that the present area set-up seemed to be very cost-efficient as it permits all five countries to share the knowledge and services of sectoral specialists, something they would be unable to do individually. It was also stressed that the area office plays an important role in the newly created region under the leadership of the regional office which will be responsible for strategic planning and programme development. The division of labour between the two offices needs to be developed. The delegation also expressed appreciation for the efficient organization of the trip by the CARK area office.

184. Another member of the team thanked UNICEF staff both in the field and at headquarters for their assistance in making the trip a success. He noted the high performance and professionalism of the UNICEF staff involved.

185. One delegation said that it was very important that the mission recognized the legitimacy of UNICEF work in these countries as presented in the trip report. He also noted the importance of emphasizing the role of the newly

created regional office in supporting not only countries with regular UNICEF programmes, but also all other countries of the region.

186. In expressing appreciation for the report, a speaker from one of the countries that was visited mentioned that the recent visits by the UNICEF Executive Director and members of the Executive Board were very important as they helped them to learn more about the difficult situation of children and the country and the innovative programmes being developed. In this context, it was mentioned that the adoption of the regional approach and establishment of the regional office were important steps in meeting the needs of the countries of the region. Another speaker discussed budgetary aspects of the visits.

United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa

187. The Deputy Executive Director, Stephen Lewis, made a special presentation on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. He informed delegations that UNICEF, along with some 20 other United Nations agencies, had participated in the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Special Initiative for Africa which was convened on 29 April in Nairobi. This was the first meeting following the official launch on 15 March, and participants were able to review the launch and the status of implementation, clarify several key issues that had arisen since the launch, identify the requirements of a political mobilization strategy, define the next steps for implementation and prepare a status report for the Administrative Committee on Coordination. It was agreed at the 29 and 30 April meeting of the Administrative Committee that the next steps in the process would concentrate on implementation planning, achieving speedy action and early results in several instances, retrofitting relevant existing efforts into the Special Initiative, involving Governments of African countries more actively, funding several efforts and identifying priority countries for implementation.

188. He mentioned that UNICEF is a participant in 7 of the 13 working groups established to oversee implementation which include water, food security, peace-building and conflict resolution, basic education, health, debt relief and partnership innovation, and that he and a representative from UNDP were responsible for overseeing the mobilization of political support. The respective roles of the working groups, their lead agencies and cooperating agencies have been clarified by the Steering Committee. Gender has been established as a cross-cutting issue requiring mainstreaming, and capacity-building has been recognized as an essential component in all sectors. While significant work has already been accomplished in several areas, he said, the working groups are actively pursuing the formulation of implementation strategies in close cooperation with African Governments to ensure that all the strategies reflect their priorities and ownership.

189. Meetings of both the Steering Committee and the Administrative Committee on Coordination have provided strong reaffirmation of United Nations system-wide support for the Special Initiative and a focus on arrangements for ensuring effective and expeditious implementation. The Administrative Committee will carry out its first review of progress in October 1996.

190. The UNICEF approach to the Special Initiative, he continued, recognizes the links to follow-up to the World Summit for Children and arrangements put in place for follow-up to international conferences. UNICEF will play a key role overall since three components - education, health and water - account for almost 90 per cent of the $25 billion in identified costs. Consequently, there will be a need to quantify financial requirements, facilitate resource

reallocation and mobilization of additional external resources, and mobilize domestic resources.

191. The Deputy Executive Director acknowledged that the key to the success of the Special Initiative would be mobilizing the support of the entire international community, and to this end the Secretary-General was convening a meeting of donor Governments and donors on 2 July in Geneva so that donor Governments and institutions might discuss the scope and financial implications of the Special Initiative. The Executive Director will represent UNICEF at that meeting.

192. He reported on a meeting in Abidjan in April, which included representatives from UNICEF, the World Bank, WHO, UNESCO and Governments. They reviewed programmes and programming in the education and health sectors. He added that UNICEF country offices have initiated discussions with other United Nations agencies to develop modalities for the operationalization of the Special Initiative at the country level. In that connection, planning, implementation and monitoring mechanisms are being developed which will take place within the context of the sectoral investment programmes. The Special Initiative has also been a focal point of regional representatives' meetings which identified key actions to operationalize the Initiative. In conclusion, he said that UNICEF has been participating in regional and subregional meetings of United Nations agencies with Governments to define more precisely the modalities for detailed country-level follow-up.

193. Several Board members expressed concern that there had already been many initiatives for Africa and that the activities of the Special Initiative should have been incorporated into existing initiatives. Particular reference was made to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (NADAF), which was ready a very comprehensive development programme. It appeared that the Special Initiative was going to replace NADAF when, instead, it should be placed in the context of the total efforts of African Governments, and efforts to mobilize resources for basic social services under the 20/20 initiative. The results of the Oslo meeting on the 20/20 initiative should also be reflected in the Special Initiative.

194. In response, the Deputy Executive Director said that when the System-wide Special Initiative for Africa was launched, the Secretary-General indicated that the context was NADAF and that the Special Initiative was not meant to usurp the principles of NADAF nor the work that had been done with that successor United Nations programme for Africa. Although NADAF was constantly referred to, and although it was seen as a general context, the Special Initiative for Africa was, in fact, taking over as the priority focus. In a sense, NADAF was being referred to in an obligatory way, but the components of the Special Initiative are the components on which the African Governments and the agencies seem to be focusing. The Deputy Executive Director concurred with the remarks on the 20/20 initiative. There seemed to be general agreement that this was an important initiative, which had benefited greatly from the experience at the Norway conference.

195. One delegation was encouraged by reports that there was close coordination among the principal potential partners in terms of resources, areas of support and the mobilization of the target populations. In this way, the beneficiaries had a feeling of ownership of the programmes that most affected them. He suggested that the countries involved should be encouraged to continue to identify the areas of priority.

196. The Deputy Executive Director replied that in terms of Africa's ownership of the Special Initiative, it had been suggested by some African ministers and Governments that they wanted to claim a stronger ownership by virtue of being much more directly involved in all planning at the country level, which everyone agreed was appropriate. There are global discussions of this matter by the Administrative Committee on Coordination. He also indicated that there were regional discussions among the agencies and within agencies, as well as very careful country-by-country discussions to examine the areas of priorities and the modalities of implementation.

197. While one Board member commented that his Government has advocated greater resources for Africa, he had some difficulty in seeing how the Special Initiative would mobilize additional resources. Thus, he said, it must have some other implications if it is to be successful, such as a better cost to benefits ratio. He said that perhaps there would be a more coherent strategy drawn up by multilateral and bilateral donors with recipient Governments and regional organizations so that the resources could be put to more effective use.

198. On the question of additional resources, the Deputy Executive Director replied that at the time of the launch, the President of the World Bank said that, at best, he could see 20 per cent additionality. It seemed generally to be accepted that this was more about the reallocation or redirection of existing monies, or monies which the Bank would mobilize from anticipated resources. It was hoped that the quality of the application of those resources would be improved because there would be more effective coordinated among United Nations agencies themselves and with the bilateral donors. He also pointed out that this was the first time that the United Nations family had ever joined in so concerted an effort around Africa in a coordinated sense. It was certainly the first time that international financial institutions were so closely integrated into an effort of the United Nations family.

Draft provisional agenda for the third regular session in September

199. The Secretary of the Executive Board reviewed the draft provisional agenda for the third regular session in September, which was based on decision 1995/38 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1) and requests from Board members since the third regular session of 1995.

200. He drew attention to agenda item 3 on proposals for UNICEF cooperation and programme reviews, recalling that as decided at the first regular session in 1995 (decision 1995/8), Board approval of final CPRs would be on a "no objection" basis. Any Board member wishing to bring a particular country programme before the Board for discussion was required to inform the secretariat in writing before the meeting. The Bureau had agreed that 12 September would be the cut-off date for the submission of such requests. The Executive Director added that the date of 12 September was as close to the session as possible, but urged delegations to submit their requests earlier to enable the secretariat to prepare as complete a response as possible.

201. With regard to agenda item 12 on follow-up to decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council, he reminded delegations that the Council would still be in session beyond the deadline for the submission of documents to the United Nations for processing. Therefore, it was proposed that consideration of this agenda item be postponed to the first regular session in 1997. It was so decided.

202. The Secretary of the Board said that there would be an informal meeting on HIV/AIDS activities of UNICEF with the participation of UNAIDS and other

partners. He also announced the dates of other meetings: 27 June on relations between the Board and the secretariat; and a pre-session briefing for the third regular session on 4 September. The date for the joint informal meeting on the harmonization of budget presentations would be announced later.

O. Concluding remarks by the Executive Director and the President of the Board

203. The Executive Director said that during the session, the Executive Board had covered a lot of ground during the substantive debates, and still managed to finish ahead of schedule. The Board had commemorated the fiftieth anniversary with a thought-provoking and entertaining programme (see paragraphs 208-213 below), had recognized the achievements of an NGO partner in Africa in presenting the 1996 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award to CREDESA and had remembered the late James Grant, in dedicating the plaza outside UNICEF House in his name. The Board had also taken a number of decisions that would be critical for the future work of UNICEF. Especially important was the MTP, which would be a flexible framework for supporting UNICEF programmes. The wide-ranging exchange of views on the strategy for children in need of special protection measures would help to guide implementation of the strategy. The Convention on the Rights of the Child would guide those actions, as it was the best guarantee of child protection.

204. She spoke of the staff in country offices around the world who often work under difficult and even dangerous conditions, and the tradition of recognizing certain outstanding efforts at the annual session. In this connection, she announced that the 1996 Staff Award was presented to the Staff Association of the UNICEF Burundi office for its efforts to build and maintain a secure and positive work environment under the very difficult and complex circumstances in that country. The Executive Director said that the Staff Association had worked effectively and actively with management to ensure that staff security remained a major consideration in planning all activities. It had worked hard to maintain staff cohesion and morale, especially in times of acute crisis, by building team spirit and solid support structures to help staff cope with crises. It had helped to obtain very positive results in complex, stressful and difficult circumstances.

205. The Executive Director thanked several individuals for their contributions to the Board and the support they have provided her in the last year. Ms. Mitra Vasisht of India, who had been until recently a Vice-President of the Board, had left Government service to join UNFPA. In addition, Mr. Jan Top Christensen of Denmark, currently a Vice-President, was returning to Copenhagen to join the Danish Foreign Ministry. Mr. Lennarth Hjelmaker, who had served as Vice-President last year, had been appointed Sweden's Ambassador to Zimbabwe. She thanked them for their active participation in the Board and wished them well in their new positions. She also congratulated Mr. François Rémy, head of the French Committee for UNICEF, on his retirement, and expressed condolences to the Swiss delegation on the death of Dr. Hans Conzett, founder of the Swiss Committee for UNICEF.

206. Finally, she paid tribute to Mr. Kul Gautam, Director of the Programme Division, who was taking a year-long study and sabbatical leave. Mr. Gautam had held his current position since 1993, and for the last year, had served as Acting Deputy Executive Director for Programmes and led the Structure of Accountability project team. Following his study leave, he would return to UNICEF ready to meet new challenges.

207. The President said that the session had been marked by a number of significant events, including the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF, the celebration of the Day of the African Child and the dedication of the James Grant Plaza outside UNICEF House. All were expressions of the appreciation and strong support UNICEF received from national and local Governments, NGOs and the public at large. The Board had adopted a number of important decisions, including those on the MTP, children in need of special protection measures and the conceptual framework for UNICEF emergency interventions. He hoped that all the decisions would further strengthen the capacity of UNICEF to respond to children's needs. The session also had demonstrated the spirit of dialogue and close cooperation between the secretariat and the Executive Board, as exemplified by the debate on MEP. He said that in awarding the 1996 Staff Award to the UNICEF team in Burundi, the Executive Director had reminded the Board of the hard work and dedication of UNICEF staff around the world.

III. COMMEMORATION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF UNICEF

208. A commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF was held in the Trusteeship Council Chamber on Wednesday, 19 June. All members of the Executive Board and observer delegations, representatives of National Committees and NGOs, and senior United Nations officials were invited to attend.

209. In his welcoming remarks, the President of the Executive Board said that the large number of guests, representing many different parts of the UNICEF family, including Governments of developing and industrialized countries, other United Nations agencies, National Committees, NGOs, Goodwill Ambassadors and UNICEF staff, was an indication of how important UNICEF had become to the international community during the last 50 years. The public at large also had been a very valuable alley of UNICEF, offering strong support over the years. Of course, he noted, the most important of all were the tens of thousands of children and women who had benefited from the assistance provided by UNICEF, beginning with children from his own region - Eastern Europe - who had received food and clothing in the aftermath of the Second World War.

210. Today, the mission and scope of UNICEF work had broadened to include not only survival, but also the protection and development of children. Steady progress was being made towards meeting the goals set by the World Summit for Children, and the international community had demonstrated its commitment to children through the near universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. But despite that good work and the best of intentions, too many children in both industrialized and developing countries were threatened by malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, exploitation and drug abuse. He asked that as delegations commemorated the founding of UNICEF, they not forget that as members of the UNICEF family, they had a special responsibility towards those children.

211. The Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, Mr. Nitin Desai, read a message from the Secretary-General congratulating UNICEF, its Executive Board and National Committees, as well as other members of the UNICEF family for their tireless efforts over the years on behalf of children and women. On 30 September, the Secretary-General would present to the General Assembly a report detailing progress that has been made towards achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children. Preliminary data suggested that major progress had been made in most countries in every region, although challenges still remained. He was particularly gratified to see that UNICEF had used its anniversary year to take stock and prepare for those challenges. In conclusion, he stated: "No cause is greater than the cause of children. They represent our future and deserve our unwavering commitment. UNICEF embodies that cause and that commitment. On behalf of the entire United Nations system, I offer you heartfelt congratulations on your fiftieth anniversary."

212. Ms. Margaret Catley-Carlson, President of the Population Council, and Mr. Olara Otunnu, President of the International Peace Academy, addressed the gathering, preceded by brief introductions by the Executive Director.

213. There was a performance by the Yamaha Junior Original concert. Six children, between the ages of 9 and 17 years, performed their own original compositions on various instruments. The standing ovation plus the bravos echoing from the Trusteeship Council were testimony to the excellence of the children's musical ability. The programme also included an audio-visual presentation that highlighted the work of UNICEF over the last 50 years, and concluded with a reception.

IV. DECISIONS ADOPTED

1996/21. Follow-up to the World Summit for Children

The Executive Board

1. Urges all Governments that have not yet completed the national process of review of progress towards implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children to do so during 1996 and also urges all countries to develop feasible and sustainable strategies and programmes to achieve the nationally adapted goals for children for the year 2000;

2. Requests the Executive Director, in consultation with all concerned parties, to extend full support to the Secretary-General in his reporting of progress made on the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children to the General Assembly on 30 September 1996, and to encourage all partners to make every effort to use the lessons learned from the mid-decade review to develop strategies and actions to achieve the goals for the year 2000.

Annual session
17 June 1996

1996/22. Greeting Card and related Operations work plan and proposed budget for 1996

A. Greeting Card and related Operations (GCO) budgeted expenditures for the 1996 season

The Executive Board

1. Approves for the fiscal year 1 May 1996 to 30 April 1997 budgeted expenditures of $99.8 million as detailed below and summarized in column II of annex I to document E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.11:

	(In millions of United States dollars)
Director's Office	0.8
Product Line and Marketing	59.6
Private Sector Fund-raising	10.5
Operations and Finance	14.4
Subtotal	85.3

Non-operating expenses:	
Market Development Programme	4.0
Fund-raising Development Programme	7.8
Exhibits	0.2
Office move related costs	0.7
GCO share in UNICEF administration costs	0.3
Central and Eastern European National Committees Development Programme	1.5
Subtotal	14.5
Total expenditures, consolidated a/	99.8

a/ For details, see table 1A of document E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.11.

2. Authorizes the Executive Director:

(a) To incur expenditures as summarized in column II of annex I to document E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.11 and to increase the expenditures up to the level indicated in column III of annex I to the same document, should the apparent net proceeds from product sales and/or private sector fund-raising increase to the levels indicated in column III of annex I, and, accordingly, to reduce expenditures below the level indicated in column II to the extent necessary, should the net proceeds decrease;

(b) To transfer funds when necessary between the various budgets as detailed under paragraph 1 above;

(c) To spend an additional amount between Executive Board sessions, when necessary, owing to currency fluctuations, to ensure the continued operation of GCO;

(d) To personally approve actual expenditure of the travel and per diem costs of National Committee participants at the annual Greeting Card Workshops and related meetings.

B. Budgeted income for the 1996 season

The Executive Board

Notes that for the fiscal year 1 May 1996 to 30 April 1997, GCO net proceeds are budgeted at $274.4 million as shown in column II of annex I to document E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.11.

C. Policy issues

The Executive Board

1. Approves the changes in posts with a net increase of 8 posts as indicated in table 2 of document E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.11;

2. Renews the Fund-raising Development Programme with $7.8 million established for 1996;

3. Renews the Market Development Programme with $4.0 million established for 1996;

4. Renews the Central and Eastern European National Committees Development Programme, which includes 10 countries, with a budget of $1.5 million established for 1996;

5. Approves the change of the GCO fiscal year from 1 May-30 April to 1 January-31 December;

6. Authorizes the Executive Director to incur expenditures in the 1996 fiscal year related to cost of goods delivered (production/purchase of raw materials, cards and other products) for the 1997 fiscal year up to $45 million as indicated in the GCO medium-term plan (see table 13 of document E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.11).

7. Encourages GCO to work together with National Committees to ensure that a far larger proportion of funds raised by them are channelled to UNICEF general resources.

Annual session
19 June 1996

1996/23. Report of the UNESCO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education on its fifth meeting

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education on its fifth meeting held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 6 and 7 May 1996 (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.63) and the recommendations contained therein.

Annual session
20 June 1996

1996/24. Report of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy on its special session

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the UNICEF/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Committee on Health Policy on its special session held at WHO Headquarters in Geneva on 15 and 16 May 1996 (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.64) and the recommendations contained therein.

Annual session
20 June 1996

1996/25. Working group on documentation

The Executive Board

Takes note of the interim report of the working group on documentation and the comments made thereon by the Executive Board at its 1996 annual session and encourages the working group on documentation to finalize its work and present a

report, including recommendations, to the Executive Board at its third regular session of 1996.

Annual session
20 June 1996

1996/26. Medium-term plan for the period 1996-1999

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the medium-term plan (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.10), which constitutes a flexible framework for supporting UNICEF programmes, as well as the comments made by the delegations during the discussions on the report of the Executive Director;

2. Emphasizes the importance of the link between the implementation of the medium-term plan and the ongoing process and the expected outcomes of the Management Excellence Programme;

3. Underlines the necessity to engage in a debate on the overall funding and the allocation of financial resources, including the allocation for administrative and programme support costs;

4. Encourages, in this context, the Executive Director to ensure that, during the financial medium-term plan, the level of management and administrative costs does not exceed the current level in nominal terms;

5. Approves with this last provision the financial medium-term plan as a framework of projections for 1996-1999 (summarized in table 3 of document E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.10), including the preparation of up to $332 million in programme expenditures from general resources to be submitted to the Executive Board in 1997 (shown in table 2, item 3, of document E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.10). The amount is subject to the availability of resources and to the condition that estimates of income and expenditure made in this plan continue to be valid.

Annual session
20 June 1996

1996/27. Children in need of special protection measures

The Executive Board,

Having considered the review of UNICEF policies and strategies on children in need of special protection measures (E/ICEF/1996/14),

Recalling the tasks of UNICEF as reflected in relevant decisions as well as in the Mission Statement,

1. Endorses the perspective, policies and strategies presented in the document regarding measures to protect children from the risk of exploitation, violence, abuse, abandonment and other forms of special disadvantage, emphasizing that the special protection measures should be implemented within the framework of the rights of children;

2. Requests the Executive Director to take the necessary steps to:

(a) Incorporate the policies and strategies in document E/ICEF/1996/14 in all relevant UNICEF programmes through mainstreaming and the further development of preventive and protection programmes for all children, especially targeted towards those in need of special protection measures;

(b) Enhance UNICEF capacities to assist all member States in analysing the situation of children in need of special protection measures and in implementing policies and strategies to that end, where appropriate, in the context of the country programming process;

(c) Monitor UNICEF activities in the implementation of these policies and strategies at the country level through existing processes such as mid-term reviews;

(d) Strengthen UNICEF partnerships with agencies of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, all sectors of civil society and others who are active in the issues of children in need of special protection measures;

3. Further requests the Executive Director to report back to the Executive Board at its 1997 annual session on the steps taken within the framework of paragraph 2 above and, simultaneously, to present to the Board a plan and a time-frame for further implementation of these policies and strategies.

Annual session
20 June 1996

1996/28. Conceptual framework for UNICEF emergency interventions

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the conceptual framework for UNICEF emergency interventions (E/ICEF/1996/16) as well as the comments made by delegations during the consideration of the document;

2. Requests the secretariat to finalize all the operational papers identified in decision 1996/2 (E/ICEF/1996/12 (Part I)) and present these papers to the Executive Board at its first regular session in 1997 in a consolidated form, reflecting a clear conceptual framework together with its operational implications.

Annual session
20 June 1996